

REMARKS

Claims 1-11 are all the claims pending in the application. Claims 1-11 are objected to, but claims 5-7 would be allowable if placed into independent form or made dependent on an allowable claim. Claims 1-4 and 8-11 are rejected. Claims 1-11 are currently amended in order to provide proper antecedent bases, to remove reference numerals and to place the claims into allowable form. The language added to amended claim 1 is disclosed at page 10, lines 14-16 and the language added to amended claim 3 is disclosed in the second to last paragraph of the specification.

Claim Objections

Claims 1-11 are objected to because of a lack of antecedent bases. Applicants have amended each claim in order to provide proper antecedent basis for claim limitations and terms. In addition, the reference numbers have been removed.

Claim Rejections - 35 U.S.C. § 102

Claims 1-4, 9 and 11 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Tomasino (6,695,653). This rejection is traversed for at least the following reasons.

Claim 1

The present invention is designed to ensure that the mechanically sensitive strands of a stranded cable are not pinched when tightening of a clamping device. This feature is described at page 10, lines 4-16 of the original specification. To this end, the invention, as defined in claim 1, is characterized by a clamping element in the form of a clamping cone and by a clamping sleeve with a clamping contour having a first section in which a limiting face of the clamping contour

extends approximately parallel to a cone face of the clamping cone. The clamping contour also defines a clear width (w) of the clamping sleeve in the region of the clamping contour that is smaller than a maximum outer diameter of the clamping cone. The claim is amended to state that the contour has rounded edges that ensure that the strands are not pinched when tightening the clamping device.

Tomasino

As is evident from a comparison of Fig. 4 of Tomasino and Fig. 6 of the present application, the outer edges of the clamping sleeve 19 in Tomasino are sharp and provide a pinching effect that can damage the sensitive strands. This arrangement has a similar problem to that identified by the Applicant at page 2, lines 34-39. By contrast, the clamping sleeve 23 in Fig. 6 of the present application have rounded edges that squeeze but do not pinch the strands, thereby avoiding the damage to the strands, in accordance with an object of the present application as stated at page 4, line 28 - page 5, line 11.

Because of this stated structural difference, the invention of amended claim 1 cannot be anticipated by Tomasino. Moreover, Tomasino clearly wishes to deform the strands in the cable, at the expense of damaging the strands, in order to provide a secure connection. However, as would be clear to one skilled in the art, such damage may result in fracturing of the strands, thereby precluding reconnection with the same strand ends, requiring a new trimming of the strand ends for a reconnection and even causing weak points that can result in a disconnection upon application of axial forces or strain. Thus, the claimed invention would not be obvious.

Claim 2

Claim 2 would be allowable for the reasons given for claim 1, from which it depends.

Claim 3

Claim 3 would be allowable for the reasons given for parent claim 1 and because it further specifies the slightly rounded section and large area clamping illustrated in Fig. 6 and disclosed at page 10, line 29-page 11, line 8.

Claim 4

Claim 4 has been placed in to independent form without substantive amendment. The claim would be patentable because there is no recess taught in Tomasino that accommodates the stranded wire. The internal annular groove shown in Fig. 1, to which the Examiner refers at page 3 of the Office Action, is intended to receive molded parts of the female connector member 12, and does not receive the stranded wire.

If the Examiner subsequently asserts the claim to be unpatentable based on Tomasino alone or in combination with other references, Applicants submit that the rejection cannot be made final.

Claims 9 and 11

Claims 9 and 11 would be allowable for the reasons given for claim 1, from which each depends.

Claim Rejections - 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claim 8 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Tomasino in view of Bronk 6,343,963. This rejection is traversed for at least the following reasons.

Tomasino

The Examiner asserts that Tomasino discloses the invention substantially as claimed except for flats for the purpose of tightening the screw connection with a defined torque.

Applicants would submit that Tomasino is also deficient for the reasons previously given with regard to the limitations of claim 1.

Bronk

The Examiner looks to Bronk for a teaching of flats 76 and asserts that Tomasino could be modified in view of the teachings of Bronk to achieve the claimed invention. However, there is nothing in Bronk that would lead one skilled in the art to modify Tomasino to have the structure of parent claim 1 that achieves the advantages of the present invention.

Claim 10 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Tomasino in view of Herman et al 5,100,348. This rejection is traversed for at least the following reasons.

Tomasino

The Examiner asserts that Tomasino discloses the invention substantially as claimed except for a contact body and clamping sleeve being produced from brass and provided with a silver plating. Applicants would submit that Tomasino is also deficient for the reasons previously given with regard to the limitations of claim 1.

Herman et al

The Examiner looks to Herman et al for a teaching of materials made of brass with a silver plating and asserts that Tomasino could be modified in view of the teachings of Herman et al to achieve the claimed invention. However, there is nothing in Herman et al that would lead one skilled in the art to modify Tomasino to have the structure of parent claim 1 that achieves the advantages of the present invention.

In view of the above, reconsideration and allowance of this application are now believed to be in order, and such actions are hereby solicited. If any points remain in issue which the

AMENDMENT UNDER 37 C.F.R. § 1.111
U.S. Appl. No. 10/569,238

Attorney Docket No. Q96160

Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephone interview, the Examiner is kindly requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

The USPTO is directed and authorized to charge all required fees, except for the Issue Fee and the Publication Fee, to Deposit Account No. 19-4880. Please also credit any overpayments to said Deposit Account.

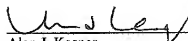
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